

Testimony – Public Hearing
Environment Committee – L.O.B.
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Good morning ladies & gentlemen, my name is Alan Huot and I reside in Granby, CT. I'm here today to speak in **OPPOSITION of SB. 994, AN Act Concerning Leghold Traps.**

I've been involved in trapping and wildlife control for over 40 years in a number of different capacities.

In my younger years as a recreational trapper, then as a State Certified Trapping Instructor, progressing to a Certified Wildlife Control Professional operating a tax-paying nuisance wildlife control business through-out the Farmington Valley. Providing wildlife control services to countless customers experiencing wildlife damage to their property. Most recently, I am the owner of a wildlife control and animal handling equipment distribution business which employs 10 people, and provides equipment needed by wildlife control professionals, worldwide.

I'm sure you're going to hear volumes of valid testimony today regarding the benefits of both the live-capture foot trap and body-gripping traps, which are their appropriate terms.

I have a few points that I'd like to share with you:

- That the professionals we as taxpayers employ at the Dept. of Environmental Protection both recognize their value and support their continued use as a wildlife management tool.
- That their **legal use** is already highly regulated in CT, and that the level of human-wildlife conflicts is actually increasing, especially involving coyote. Hence, the establishment of a land trapping season 3 years ago for coyote, of which there has NOT been a single law enforcement incident reported.
- That live-capture foot traps have been successfully used to both capture and protect endangered species. In fact, wildlife biologists in Wisconsin, Minnesota, Idaho and others use them to capture wolves for relocation to other areas, and New York, Indiana, and Missouri have used the live-capture foot trap to re-establish populations of river otters.
- That the Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (AFWA) initiated the most extensive research effort ever conducted in the United States, the result of which is a set of Best Management Practices (BMP's) for trapping which takes into account Animal welfare, Efficiency, Selectivity, Practicality, and Safety. Both the live-capture foot trap and the body-gripping traps are recommended in these BMP's and Connecticut's trapping laws comply with many of these Best Management Practices.

While all of the abovementioned items are statements of fact, I'd like to put forth another perspective for your consideration. CT already bans **ALL** trapping devices (REPEAT). There isn't a trapping device, of any type, in existence which can be **LEGALLY SET** in Connecticut without the expressed, written permission of the property owner. No matter that the property is owned by the State government, Corporate or business entity, or private individual, written permission, properly dated, must be secured from each and every landowner for this legal activity to occur. If every property owner in Connecticut were to withhold their written permission sanctioning trapping as an activity, it would cease to exist !

SB. 994 removes or at the very least further diminishes the property owners' decision making ability as to which activities and trapping devices may be used to protect their property from damage.

Lastly, I'd like to clarify for the Committee a statement that the animal rights factions like to promote as justification for eliminating live-capture foot traps and body-gripping traps.

"Voters in Arizona, California, Colorado, Massachusetts, and Washington have approved very strict trapping bans through ballot initiatives, banning leghold traps, snares, and body-crushing traps. Florida, New Jersey and Rhode Island have banned leghold traps through the state legislature or the state wildlife or natural resources department. "

While it is true that these States have eliminated specific trapping devices allowed for use, what has NOT been eliminated is the ongoing need for comprehensive wildlife control. Lets take a look at some of these States:

Massachusetts is the poster child of the animal rights proponents who in 1996 were successful in convincing the electorate they should do away with live-capture foot traps and body-gripping traps. Since that time, the beaver population has soared from 16,000 to approx. 70,000 animals (FACT), resulting in millions of dollars of animal damage and increased cost to the taxpayers, body-gripping traps are still widely used, albeit under special permit, and beavers are now caught in suitcase-type traps costing \$350.00 each and then shot. The public outcry has gotten to such proportions that legislation is being proposed to rescind portions of the 1996 trap ban.

New Jersey - Since the elimination of the live-capture foot trap, statewide snaring has been allowed and continues to this day.

Florida – same as New Jersey, again Florida allows snaring statewide.

Arizona - Trap ban is for public lands only, no device restriction on private property.

And the list goes on.....Passage of S.B. 994 will not eliminate the need for wildlife control by the citizens of the State of Connecticut , and it will doing nothing to prevent ILLEGAL occurrences with bona-fide wildlife management tools. Please OPPOSE S.B. 994.

Thank you !

Alan A. Huot